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PRESS RELEASE

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56 Young Nigerians to attend 2019 Mandela Washington Fellowship Program

The U.S. Mission to Nigeria will send 56 young Nigerians to participate in the 2019 Mandela Washington Fellowship program for six weeks from June 17 to August 1. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). It is composed of academic coursework, leadership training, and networking. Five out of the 56 fellows will remain in the United States for an additional six weeks to participate in a professional development experience at select companies and organizations.

Through this initiative, 28 U.S. universities will host 700 young leaders from sub-Saharan Africa for institutes focused on public management, business and entrepreneurship, and civic leadership. As always, the Nigerian contingent represent the largest cohort from any one country.

The U.S. Embassy invited three leading Nigerian professionals to mentor the Fellows: Daniel Ikuenobe, Senior Special Advisor to the President on ERGP; Bukola Shonibare, 2016 alumnus and founder of Girl Child Africa; and Segun Odunaiya, 2014 MWF alumnus and founder of Havenhill Synergy Limited. All three of them shared unique perspectives on leadership and opportunity.

The U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs, Mr. Aruna Amirthanayagam, says that more than 11,000 Nigerians applied to participate in the 2019 Mandela Washington Fellowship program. "After the review by our partner NGO and members of the Mission Nigeria community, followed by an interview in either Abuja, Lagos, or Ibadan, 56 young Nigerians were selected", he said.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship and the larger YALI program embody the U.S. government's commitment to investing in the future of Africa.

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